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ORIENTAL SKETCHES:

BEING

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

OF

SAMUEL SMITH, M.P.

LIVERPOOL:

TURNER, ROUTLEDGE & CO. 9, TITHEBARN STREET.

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ORIENTAL SKETCHES.

CAIRO,

SATURDAY, 9TH JANUARY, 1886.

I begin a letter this evening, though the mail does not leave for some days yet. We are now comfortably settled in the Capital of Egypt, and feel quite at home. I wrote last from Brindisi, where the English mail is taken on board, and where a good many passengers joined us. We left there on Monday morning, and had a most beautiful passage to Alexandria, reaching it on Thursday morning. The weather was perfect; bright sunny skies, hardly any wind, and a temperature like our summer. I began wearing two topcoats at Venice, and ended by casting off both. We were able to sit out on deck all day, and had pleasant intercourse with several of the passengers.

When we reached Alexandria we were required to perform quarantine for twenty-four hours, on the foolish pretext that our ship came from Venice, where it was said there were a few cases of cholera. The ship's company were all perfectly well, but we were not allowed to land till next day; and some people came on board with fumigating cans, with which they professed to cleanse the ship! It gave great amusement to the boys. We spent the day pleasantly on board, and next morning, after breakfast, we left the ship, and landed at Alexandria.

It is a strange sight, the first plunge into an oriental country, and the medley of black and coloured races of all kinds afforded unbounded amusement to the boys. Of

course it had not the same novelty for me, but Mrs. Smith and the rest of the party were much struck by it. We took train straight to Cairo, and got most comfortably settled in Sheppard's Hotel here about 4 p.m. yesterday. It is where I stayed on passing through Egypt for India 23 years ago.

CAIRO,

TUESDAY, 12TH JANUARY.

We spent Saturday on a visit to the Pyramids; it was a beautiful day, crisp and clear, and not hot. We drove along a shady road some ten miles, which I traversed on a donkey when here before. We passed some Egyptian villages, which seemed to the eye like a collection of beehives made of mud. We passed many donkeys and camels loaded with grass and hay. We found a crowd of shouting Arabs at the foot of the Great Pyramid, and our guide made a bargain with them for a certain sum to be paid to their Sheik, and we were immediately laid hold of by three or four strong men for each of our party, and dragged up the steep side of the Pyramid by main force. Either age has stiffened my joints, or my recollection has become dim, for it seemed to me much harder work to get up the Pyramid than it was before. The steps are two or three feet high, and it is sometimes impossible to get over them without help; my joints got very stiff, and my wind gave way before I got up, but the boys mounted up easily. Mrs. S. wisely waited for us below. The height of the Pyramid is 480 feet, and the base covers 13 acres, and the masonry is equal to 5 or 6 millions of tons, so you can imagine the labour that was expended. There are three Pyramids altogether, and we ascended the largest, that of Cheops, said to have been built 2170 years before Christ, or 150 years before the time of Abraham! It is held by some learned men that the Pyramid was divinely

constructed, like the Tabernacle, and that its measurements testify to the knowledge of both terrestrial and celestial phenomena. Certainly some of the coincidences are astonishing. We had a very fine view of the Nile valley, and Cairo, and the desert on either side. The fertile part inundated by the Nile is about ten miles wide, and at the season of flood it is all covered with water, and the villages built on higher ground stand out like islands. We descended much more easily, and then all the party, except myself, entered the dark passage which leads to the centre of the Pyramid, where it is supposed the founder was buried. I had done it before, and did not like the heat, and the sense of oppression. The boys had brought a photographic apparatus, and took some scenes of the Pyramids and Arab guides, and then we started for home after a very enjoyable day.

On Sunday we attended Church twice at the American Presbyterian Mission; the congregation was mostly made up of British soldiers belonging to the garrison here. We made the acquaintance of Dr. Lansing, the head of the American Mission, a very interesting man, who has been 35 years in Egypt. There is much good work doing amongst the soldiers. It is a striking sight to see these red coats everywhere; they are fine looking young men, especially the 42nd Highlanders (the Black Watch). Where we now live the Hotel is full of English officers, tall handsome looking men in the prime of life. Monday I devoted to looking up the various English officials, and had much conversation about Egypt. All the English here blame our Government for not taking full possession of the country; they are all Conservatives, as is generally the case out of England. To-day we went to the Boulah Museum; but I had nearly forgotten to tell you we had one of the most interesting sights I ever had in my life yesterday, viz. a visit to the Great Mahomedan College

of El-Azhar, where 8000 students are being instructed in the Koran, which is their Bible, in order to serve as priests throughout the various Mahomedan countries. These students embrace all ages and conditions; there were children of 10 or 12, and old grey-haired men, all squatting on the floor in little groups, often with a teacher in the centre explaining to them the sacred writings. Many were laboriously committing these to memory, and none can finish their course till they have passed an examination, and are certified to possess a thorough knowledge of the Koran. They must be able to repeat the whole book word for word without a mistake, which usually occupies them 10 or 12 years, sometimes 20 or 30 years! The priests so sent forth are fanatical Mahomedans, and spread themselves over a great part of the world. At one time there were over 20,000 students attending this College. Dr. Lansing tells me it is no easy matter arguing with them, they are so clever and well taught.

We visited to-day Miss Whately's excellent School, where 500 or 600 Arab children get a thorough Scriptural training. We heard a class examined, and they answered in English almost as well as Sunday School children do at home. Miss Whately says that hardly any Mahomedan can avow himself a Christian here without risking his life. She says that if Arabi's rebellion had been successful, all the Christians in Egypt would have been murdered, and if we were to withdraw the same would happen now.

We have seen some other things, which we cannot particularise. To-morrow we go to some more distant Pyramids, and the site of ancient Memphis, and on Thursday we go to Suez to join our steamer on Friday, and we hope to reach Bombay on 26th January. The weather here is very fine, rather cold when the sun does not shine, but bright and pleasant. The roads are very dusty. Hardly any rain falls in Egypt. The Hotel is

crowded, and, if one had time, there are plenty of interesting people to speak to.

ON BOARD "GWALIOR,"

RED SEA, NEAR ADEN, 20TH JAN. 1886.

We are approaching Aden, where mails are taken off, and I address another letter to tell you how we got on since last Tuesday (12th inst.) when I wrote you from Cairo. We had a most interesting day on Tuesday, when we visited the wonderful remains at Sakhara—a place some 20 miles from Cairo. We went partly by rail, and partly on *donkeys*, riding in all some 17 miles. These splendid little animals cantered most of the way at a great rate, and made me so stiff that for two or three days after I felt as if I had been beaten all over! We made up a party of ten in all. Mrs. S. rested in Cairo, as she could not stand the donkey ride. The most wonderful thing which we saw was the vast tomb in which the ancient Egyptians buried their "sacred bulls." You know that for many centuries they worshipped bulls! There was one which they considered specially sacred; it had a temple and priests, and when it died it was buried in a large stone coffin or "sarcophagus," and 31 of these coffins are placed in this deep underground cavern which we visited; each of them weighs 85 tons, and you marvel how they were got there; it took about 600 years to fill the place. It had been buried for ages beneath the sands of the desert till an enterprising Frenchman, called Mariette Bey, discovered the entrance by digging in the sand, and a gallery, some one-eighth or one-fourth of a mile long, stood revealed. The vast antiquity of every thing in Egypt overwhelms one. Even on the most moderate calculation the Pyramids date back to before the time of Abraham!

We left Cairo next day for Suez, where we spent Friday. I was curious to see something of the famous Canal, but found so many difficulties in the way that I could hardly see anything of it. We took a little boat to its mouth, but found we should have to pay £15 for dues if we went up any distance.

P.S.—We returned home through the Canal on board the “Shannon.”

We have had a fine voyage down the Red Sea. Yesterday only was rather rough. It has become rather hot, but not oppressive—never over 81° in the shade. At Cairo it was 55° , and at Venice 32° , so the change has been great, but we do not feel it much. We are all in light costume, and as the port-holes were closed last night, and the cabins very close, I slept on deck and the boys in the main hatch, and Mrs. S. and some other ladies on the tables of the saloon! You see how quickly we adapt ourselves to the situation.

BOMBAY, 3RD FEB. 1886.

I have had a very interesting time here, and have seen a great variety of people, and have got an immense amount of information. We go on to-night to Jeypore, where we stay two or three days. We then go on to Delhi for a short time, then to Agra for a few days; both are full of interest. We hope to reach Calcutta by the end of the month.

The weather here is decidedly cool, indeed at nights it is rather cold. People here say it is several years since it has been so cool;—it marked 55° the night before last, and I was glad to wear a topcoat.

We paid a most interesting visit to the Scottish Orphanage yesterday with the Presbyterian Minister, Mr. Greig. He and his wife spent the evening with us. On the Sunday

we went in the morning to the Free Church. Congregation only * 29, including six of us; in the evening to the Established Presbyterian Church, where Mr. Greig preaches to a full congregation. On Saturday evening I met a large gathering of leading natives, and had a most interesting conversation with them on the subjects they wish brought before Parliament. I am convinced we must find some legitimate channel for the expression of native opinion either in India or England. There is much discontent at their exclusion from all voice in the Government. When Ireland is settled, India will be ready to occupy Parliament for more than one Session. The problems to be solved here are gigantic and most difficult.

There is a rumour here of a proposal to suspend the coinage of Silver in India, but I do not think there is any truth in it; it would never work at all. I have spent much time with Col. White, the Director of the Mint here; it coins 5 millions sterling of rupees annually. He leans—like most high Indian officials—to Bi-metallism.

JEYPORE, 5TH FEB. 1886.

I start a letter from this interesting place, the capital of a native State in Rajputana, some 700 miles North of Bombay. We left Bombay on the 3rd of February, in the evening, and took train to this place. I looked forward with some uneasiness to the long railway journey of 36 hours, but in place of fatiguing us it has been a great rest. We had most comfortable sleeping carriages, and slept much better than in the Hotel at Bombay, and the air was fresh and invigorating; at night it got rather cold, and we had to put on thick top coats, and a quilt as well. I am told ice was seen one morning! We reached

* The best congregations are always in the evening.

Ahmedabad at nine on Saturday, and I found two handsomely dressed natives waiting for us, who presented Mrs. S. and me with pretty nosegays, and invited us to take a drive through the town in a carriage which they had provided. They were the sons of an old correspondent of mine, whose acquaintance I had formed on my former visit 23 years ago; one of them is now Mayor of the city. They are carrying out all sorts of improvements, Schools, Colleges, &c. in the most improved English style. The principal of these gentlemen, a clever Brahmin, conversed with me in as good English, and quite as intelligently as the Mayor of an English town could do. Though nominally a Hindoo, he had embraced the Brahmo Somaj faith, and they had built a temple for it; it is a sort of compound of Hindooism and Theism. I am struck with the growing intelligence of the natives, and their rapid increase in self-respect and capacity for self-government.

We had a most pleasant ride, and then started off again by train; and passed all yesterday in a very interesting manner, gazing on the simple primitive life of the country, and reading alternately. We had our beds made up about 9 p.m. and had again a good night's rest, and got up this morning quite fresh for a cup of tea at 7 a.m. We saw the glorious sunrise. The East is always purpled over a pale violet and pinkish hue half an hour before sunrise, and the West half an hour after sunset; the sky is always a deep blue, without a cloud, and the glory of the starlit heavens at night is wonderful. I may mention here that the splendour of the evening star is beyond all description; at times, especially when we were at sea, it shone almost with the brightness of the moon.

But to return to my story. We reached Jeypore at 9 a.m. and found most comfortable rooms provided for us in the pretty Hotel, called "Kaisar-i-Hind," which means

“Empress of India.” We found ourselves sitting at breakfast beside two gentlemen, one of whom turned out to be a Manchester merchant, who knew me. But I must tell you about to-day’s work. We have been driving about this singular place all day, and are charmed with all we have seen; it is considered the finest native city of India. It has been rebuilt within recent years by a public spirited and cultivated Rajah; it has wide streets, fine palaces, museum, library, art gallery, beautiful public gardens, and I do not know what else; it is really a most interesting place. The streets are crowded with people, picturesquely dressed in clothes of many colours. One meets in the streets large elephants, camels, bullock carts, fine Arab horses, and donkeys, all blended together in a strange medley. The general judgment of the party was that they had never seen anything so striking. We saw the Rajah’s stables, containing 300 horses; he has also 50 elephants; and I must not forget our visit to his pond, where he keeps tame alligators, which come crowding to the shore on a signal to be fed with raw meat; they are horrid looking animals, with fearful teeth and jaws, able to drag a horse under water, and devour it. We also saw a number of wild tigers, which he keeps in a sort of menagerie—fierce animals, which roared and dashed themselves about the cages when we went near them.

We saw innumerable trades carried on in the open air, along the sides of the streets, such as the spinning wheel, dying cloths, making pottery, copper vessels, &c. All the operations of life seemed going on under our eyes; people washing themselves, being shaved, &c. in the public street. We made several little purchases, and had a crowd of natives round us taking a kindly interest in all that we did. There are many beautiful things made here, and at very low prices. Wages in India are about 4d a day, so everything made by hand-labour is cheap.

SATURDAY, 2 P.M.

We have just returned from a remarkable excursion to the deserted city of Amber, the former capital of Jeypore, and I must put down my impressions while they are fresh. Well, fancy us starting at 8.30 in three carriages, the two Manchester gentlemen we met here having joined our party; the air deliciously crisp and cool, just like a fine October morning at home. We first wound our way through the modern city, and then got into a country road, with hedges of prickly cactus. In a short time we came to deserted temples and public buildings sprinkled over the face of the country; they gradually multiply till we are in the midst of a large abandoned city. The effect produced is very singular; it reminds one of the City of the Dead, described in the "Arabian Nights." The situation is most beautiful; wooded hills surround you, a green lake lies in the bottom, groves of palm trees and patches of verdure relieve the arid dusty plain, which at this season of the year forms the Indian landscape. And now comes another surprise. The carriages stop at a gentle ascent, and we find four or five huge elephants waiting for us. It seems to be the custom to perform the remainder of the journey on elephants; each of the huge beasts kneels down, and a little ladder is put up against his side, and we mount up into a small platform on the back. Mrs. S., Miss J., E., and I sit upon one, two on each side of the platform. The huge creature suddenly rises up, and almost shakes you off; then it moves slowly on, with a sea-saw motion, like that of a boat heaving on a gentle swell.

One is struck with the disproportion between cause and effect. We are but mites on the back of the monster; he could just as easily have carried a lot of oxen. The height of our elephant was fully ten feet; the driver climbs

up and down his snout; the creature stretches out his trunk for him when he wishes to come up; he sits upon the elephant's neck, and guides him with a sharp iron prong, with which he gives a gentle prick on either side he wishes the elephant to go. Ours was 25 years old; the boys' 60 years, and we are told they sometimes live and work till 120. They are wonderfully quiet and sagacious beasts, and not like the camel, which is ill-tempered, and sometimes bites and even kills his driver. We rode two or three miles on elephants, till we came into the court-yard of the old deserted palace. Here we had another surprise. We passed through spacious courts and galleries, richly ornamented, and rising tier above tier like some of the romantic palaces in Turner's paintings. The rooms looked as fresh as if they had been inhabited yesterday, and yet they have been deserted for over a hundred years. The views from the top are splendid. It only needed a fall of rain to clothe the hill sides with verdure to reproduce the image of a Highland pass; but I had nearly forgotten to tell of another sight which we saw before going over the palace. We entered a Hindoo temple, where an aged priest was serving at the shrine of Kalee, the goddess of destruction. We stood in the outer area, and saw him inside a dark recess, where stood an ugly idol, muttering prayers and offering fruit and flowers to the image. He had a little bell, which he tinkled occasionally, and one felt a curious sensation of pity and disgust at the grossness of the worship. That feeling was increased when we noticed a large knife or sword and a heap of cinders, with some stains on the marble floor, caused by the blood of a goat which is sacrificed there every day; but our feelings deepened into horror when we were told that at that altar there used to be slain every day a *man* as an offering to the idol, during the reign of the previous Rajah. The barbarous sacrifice was

commuted into one of a buffalo, and afterwards that was exchanged for a goat. Let us hope that the time is coming when all these abominations will cease, but it will need a long time to shake the hoary fabric of Hindooism, which has grown deep in the soil of this country during 2000 years.

We remounted our elephants, left the deserted city with the feeling that "we had seen strange things to-day," and, after a pleasant drive, got back to our Hotel at 2 p.m. in time for tiffin, Anglicè lunch.

8TH FEBRUARY.

I conclude this letter with a chapter on Missions. I made the acquaintance of the U. P. Mission here, consisting of two missionaries, and two Zenana ladies. All the missionaries in Rajputana are connected with the U. P. Scotch Church; they have two bungalows about two miles out of Jeypore, too far, I should think, for their work, which lies in the town, as they have always to drive backwards and forwards. Mr. McAllister, one of the Missionaries, conducted service in the English Church to a very small congregation, some twenty in all.

After Church I went with Mr. McAllister to his Sunday School in Jeypore. I was much interested in it; a large house was filled with classes. I went to his class, which is conducted on the flat roof of the house, under a sort of canopy, to protect them from the hot sun. He allowed me to examine the class, and I asked them many questions, which were very well answered, indeed as well as they would be in a like class at home. This occupied an hour, and then we had another class of pundits, or teachers, middle-aged men, employed as teachers in the various Mission Schools. These men do not profess to be Christians, but are eager to be instructed in the evidences of Christianity, and we had a very interesting time with them. They

answered my questions very well, and showed a correct knowledge of some of the principal doctrines of our faith. One could not help wondering that men so intelligent should still profess Hindooism, with all its absurdities; but it is the Caste system that holds it up. It has no intellectual hold upon the educated people. Many of these inwardly must be fully convinced of the truth of our religion, and some day there will be a wholesale turning to Christianity. From what I have seen here, I think the education of the young in Missionary Schools and Colleges is the most thorough part of their work, and will have the most lasting effects.

I went again in the afternoon to a service for adults at the mission bungalow, when some twenty were present, and I gave a short address, which the missionary translated. There are many things about missions which I should like to comment upon, but have no time to write further. We have so much to see and do here, it is almost impossible to find time to record all one's impressions. Mrs. S. visited some of the native ladies this afternoon with Miss M. of the Zenana mission, and had some curious experiences, which I leave her to narrate. Just as I close a few drops of rain are falling, the first we have seen since we left England. Another Liverpool gentleman came in here to-night: we were almost a family party at dinner !

DELHI,

TUESDAY, 9TH FEB. 1886.

We left Jeypore on Monday at noon. We have a most pleasant remembrance of our visit to that very interesting place; all was so bright and beautiful, indeed the weather was perfect. We travelled yesterday by rail through a flat country, with here and there hills skirting the horizon.

We reached Delhi at 8 p.m. and put up at the North-

brook Hotel. It is impossible to describe it; the rooms consist of little but interminable rows of doors. The bed-room I write in rejoices in 14 doors, many of which I have not ventured to open, feeling a sort of awe lest something should happen to me akin to the fate of Blue Beard's wife, if I profanely try to force them open.

The ladies are in the drawing-room just now, which resembles a crowded bazaar, as each night after dinner a throng of pedlars invade it with jewellery, embroidered cloths, shawls and other kinds of Delhi work.

But to resume our journey. We had a good night's sleep here, and had a drive before breakfast at 10 a.m. People here usually take an early cup of tea, say at 7 a.m. and then a solid breakfast at 10. Our complaint is that we can get little except butcher's meat to all our meals. They have generally four or five kinds of tough meat, and very few vegetables; it is a great mistake feeding people this way in a hot climate. Well, after breakfast we took a carriage and a guide, and sallied off in quest of adventures. We first took a general drive through the town. It stands close to the river Jumna, the chief feeder of the Ganges, which at this season is quite low, and is completely surrounded by a high wall, built by the Emperor Shah Jehan, the founder of this city 250 years ago. Behind this wall the mutinous Sepoys, some 40,000 in number, defied the little British army encamped outside the town for four months. The attacking force was only 9000 men, but they effected a breach in the wall and forced their way in, and took the city after three days' fighting from street to street, with the loss of one-third of the attacking column. It was one of the greatest feats of arms on record. The city swarms with people. You make your way with difficulty through the crowded streets, the syce or postillion who attends your carriage screaming at the top of his voice to prevent people being run over.

We first visited the old Fort, where the Palace of Shah Jehan stood. The finest part of it is preserved, and looks as fresh as when built 250 years ago; it is of white marble, beautifully inlaid with precious stones. We were surprised at the beauty of the carving and workmanship; it was just one vast and exquisite picture, but on looking closely you could see where the richest stones had been picked out by the Sikh soldiers at the sack of Delhi. The holes have been partly filled up with sealing wax at the cost of the Government, but it has not the same effect as the brilliant cornelian stones. In the centre of this Palace there stood at one time the famous "Peacock Throne" of the Mogul Emperors; the jewellery upon it was valued at 3 millions sterling. It was carried off by the Persian invader Nadir Shah, who sacked Delhi in the middle of last century.

All about this city reminds you that it was the seat of a mighty empire for many hundreds of years; from about the twelfth century onwards the Mahommedans ruled in Delhi, and most of India became subject to them. About half the people here are Mahommedans, and they must feel mortified at their position now. It was curious to see the red coats inside the ancient Fort. There are splendid barracks built for them, but they are very unhealthy. I spoke to some of the soldiers, and was sorry to find so many invalided there. They say that the water is bad, and that malaria comes from the Jumna. Many were suffering from sickness or accidents, dating from the great review held here a short time ago. The weather was very bad and the troops got drenched, and their tents were flooded with water. I felt sorry for the poor fellows. It requires careful management to keep English troops in health on the plains of India. We called in the afternoon on Mr. McNabb, the Chief Commissioner here, and he showed us in his garden the site of the batteries that breached the walls of Delhi; his own house was occupied

by the mutineers, but they were surprised and killed by the British forces, and then his house was used for the attacking force. After this we visited the famous Jami Muschid Mosque; it is a huge building. In the vast courtyard in its centre sometimes assemble 40,000 Musselmans to say their prayers. It is very striking to see the attention Mahommedans pay to their religion; they say their prayers publicly seven times a day, and do not mind who may be present. Our guide prostrated himself on the ground, and kissed it several times, reciting verses from the Koran, and looking towards Mecca. We went up one of the two tall minarets of the Mosque, and had a fine view of the whole city. It looks very imposing, but the country is a dead level plain as far as the eye can reach.

After this we visited the Baptist Mission here; they have fine large premises.

The air here is cool and bracing, about 55° at night and 70° to 75° in the day time. We never enjoyed more delicious weather than we have had in India.

THURSDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY.

I now continue our narrative. Yesterday morning, when we got up, we found a very cold wind blowing; it made one shiver on stepping out, and the natives looked half frozen in their thin cotton garments. Many of them are not half covered; some have only a strip round the middle: many of the little children are stark naked. It is a mystery to me how they live in such weather; our guide says that many of them die of cold. I was glad to wear two top coats at once when driving early and late. The sun warmed the air during the day, but the wind, which comes from the snowy ridges of Afghanistan, is always cold. I never felt more bracing weather; it is splendid for toning one up. After breakfast we started for a long day's journey. We passed through

a country studded with old buildings, belonging to ages anterior to the present city of Delhi, which is only 250 years old. It was the custom of Eastern monarchs often to choose a new site for a city, and Delhi has occupied several sites at various times during the past thousand years, and the country for 10 or 15 miles round is covered with ruins. There still survive many large mausoleums, or tombs, built for the Kings or Prime Ministers; they look like Mosques, having large domes, with court-yards in the centre, and often accommodation enough for scores of persons to sleep at night. We visited some, whose names I need not trouble you with; all are Mahomedan, showing that the native Hindoos have long been a subject race. The last Hindoo King was crowned in A.D. 1193, and the Mahomedans ruled over this part of India till they were subverted by the English. On the way we passed the remains of a huge Observatory, built by the Rajah of Jeypore, who was a famous astronomer. Our road was bordered by large crops of wheat, which form the chief cold weather crop round Delhi. It is sown in October, reaped in April; then come the rains in June, when other crops are sown, and reaped in September or October. Wheat is becoming an enormous article of export from India. The crops are very good this year.

The main object of our journey was to see the famous pillar or column of Kutub Minar, said to be the largest in the world. It stands 11 miles from Delhi, in the midst of the broken arches and finely carved pillars of old Temples, which are scattered profusely all over the ground. It is a remarkable object. The shape is very elegant, and its dimensions are imposing. It rises 240 feet high, thick at the base, and gently tapering to the top. The sides are beautifully fluted, and a circular stair inside takes you easily to the top, from which you have a splendid view of the surrounding country. I felt much

impressed by the historical associations. On all sides are seen ruined cities, memorials of vanished empires. One is struck by the great scale on which history has been enacted here; evidently there have been powerful monarchs and great nations, whose magnificence is attested by the wonderful remains of these landmarks. The ruins almost surpass those of ancient Rome.

This great column (the Kutub) is 700 years old, but looks as fresh as if built yesterday. Its proportions are as graceful as can be seen anywhere in the world, and show what knowledge of architecture these people must have had when we were little better than savages. We drove from the Kutub to see the ruins of an ancient city called Tugluckabad; it was built by the freak of a despot some centuries ago, and was only occupied for a few years. The walls which surround it are gigantic, and well preserved: they extend for several miles. They seem to have been from 60 to 80 feet high, and enormously thick. Compared with them castles like Warwick or Kenilworth appear mere toys!

We then drove home in the late evening, passing droves of bullock-carts, with the wearied peasants half asleep. These large country carts are generally drawn by four bullocks; some of them are splendid animals, very large and handsome, and with such a gentle expressive face, but many are evidently under-fed, with sharp projecting bones. Nearly all the work here is done by bullocks, though a good many camels and asses are also used. We dined in the evening with the Chief Commissioner of Delhi. His house is a large building, called Ludlow Castle, a few hundred yards outside the walls. It was occupied by the mutineers as an advanced post, but was surprised by the British early in the morning, and all the guard were killed; then it was used as an outpost of the British army, and the cannon that breached the walls

were planted in the garden. We saw tablets to commemorate the event.

The following forenoon we went over the ground famous in the siege. We visited the Kashmere Gate, which was blown in by a little party, most of whom were killed on the spot, and through which the attacking column entered and stormed the city. It took six days' fighting in the streets to drive the mutineers out of the town. The total British force never exceeded 10,000 men, and they lost 3800 in the course of the siege. Our guide gave us a vivid picture of the terrible scenes enacted at the time. He showed where 3000 of the mutineers were slain; it was a life and death struggle, and no quarter was given on either side. It is wonderful to see everything so quiet now. Our guide told us that many of the old mutineers are now in the service of the Government, but they keep very quiet about the past.

We went over the rising ground called the "Ridge," two miles outside the town, where our army encamped during the four months the siege lasted. There is a beautiful monument erected there to the memory of the fallen.

In the afternoon we visited different scenes. We drove some miles out of Delhi to see the famous Mausoleum of the Emperor Humayoun, passing on the way another ruined city, with gigantic walls, called the Pathan Fort. The Tomb or Mausoleum of Humayoun is the finest we have yet seen. It is an immense structure, almost as big as a Cathedral, raised upon a huge platform of brick; the sides of it are beautifully carved. It abounds in marble and red sandstone screens pierced in the most exquisite style. The labour bestowed is beyond belief. Such works can only be done in an age when despotic power can command an unlimited amount of forced labour.

After this we went on a little further to visit quite a

cluster of tombs, also adorned with this exquisite marble work. The tombs were very much smaller, but the walls were composed of this delicate marble tracery, which looks like Brussels lace. Strange to say these beautiful buildings are surrounded by poor mud cottages, inhabited by squalid looking half naked people; but such contrasts are quite common in India.

While we were so engaged, the ladies were very differently occupied. The Baptist Zenana Missionaries here had arranged a Darbar, or reception for native ladies, in the afternoon at the Mission-house; and Mrs. S. and Miss J. were invited. It was a great event here, for the richer classes in India never allow their ladies to appear in public. They are kept constantly shut up in the women's apartments, and when they go abroad they are curtained off, so that they cannot see, or be seen. They, however, persuaded a number of native ladies to attend, on condition that the Mission-house should be curtained off, and no male visitors allowed on the premises. About 100 attended, some of them richly adorned with jewels, but all as ignorant as children. They were entertained with a magic lantern, picture books and music, but little conversation was possible owing to their ignorance of the commonest things; they could not even understand the pictures, from not knowing the objects they refer to. Some of them did not know the difference between a ship and a cart. They live the dreariest, most aimless life that can be imagined, worse than that of the prisoners in jails; they cannot read or sew, and have no occupation except cooking their husband's food, which they are not allowed to eat with him. The great difficulty of the Zenana work is to get access to them at all, but this is gradually being overcome, especially when the visiting ladies are doctors.

At 1 p.m. on Friday we all went to the Great Mosque

to see the Mahomedan worship which takes place at that hour. Friday is their Sabbath. It was a very impressive sight. Some thousands of people were assembled in the great court-yard; they first washed in the tank or fountain in the centre. They must wash their feet, hands, face, nose, and mouth before worshipping. Then a pulpit was placed in front of the Mosque, and three priests or Imaums ascended it; another priest read passages from the Koran to the assembly, and at a given signal from the priests they all prostrated themselves on the ground, touching it with their foreheads; this they repeated several times. It was striking to see the assemblage moving with one accord, like the waves of the sea; they repeated certain words in common. Our guide, a Mahomedan, was fervent in his devotions. I asked him afterwards what prayers he uttered, and he said he repeated the words "God is Great" over and over, and apparently said nothing else. The service occupied half an hour, and we left impressed with the great vitality of Mahomedanism. It is a far more fierce and intolerant form of faith than Hindooism, and few converts are made to Christianity, but when made they are more thorough and constant.

In the afternoon we revisited some more places in the town, and I went in the evening to an entertainment at a native gentleman's house two miles in the country. The leading Hindoos had heard of me from Mr. —, who is here at present, and was most urgent that I should attend a social gathering. It began about 9 p.m. but the guests kept dropping in till 10 or 11 p.m. Time seems to be of no account in India, and we could not get away till after 12. It was an odd entertainment to our notions. Four chairs were placed for the English sahibs (gentlemen) at the end of the room, and some 40 or 50 natives squatted round the room, smoking hookahs in a most impassive manner, each one dressed differently from the others. A

musical band performed dreariest music, accompanied by a shrill female voice; there was no harmony in our sense of the word. This continued for most of the evening. I found, however, some intelligent and interesting English speaking natives, especially a Brahmin, converted to Christianity, who had just arrived from Edinburgh, where he had been, for six years, studying medicine.

LAURIE'S HOTEL, AGRA,

MONDAY, 15TH FEB. 1886.

I now commence another letter to describe this wonderful city; my last was closed on Friday at Delhi. We left there on Saturday at 1.30 p.m. and arrived here at 9 p.m. and got comfortable rooms in this excellent hotel. We had engaged our rooms some days before, and it was well, as 22 people were turned away that night. This is evidently a great centre for travellers, and some 50 English people sit down to dinner here every day. We spent Sunday quietly; went to the English Church service in the morning, where we had quite a military congregation; some hundreds of soldiers present, fine looking men of the Manchester and Lincoln regiments. I then presented a letter of introduction to the Baptist Mission here, which is very strong, having 13 agents, including three Zenana ladies, who are to dine with us to-night. I went to a native Christian service in the afternoon; some 30 present, and to the Havelock Baptist Chapel in the evening, where we had a good English congregation, including several red coats.

This morning we sallied out before breakfast to have our first view of the famous Taj Mahal. We had heard such ravishing descriptions of its beauty, that we expected to be disappointed, as people usually are when anything is overpraised. We drove two miles outside the town,

and were landed at a splendid gateway, made of red sandstone interlined with marble, so imposing that we thought it a fine Mosque, but it only serves as an approach to the fairy like structure of pure white marble which bursts upon your sight as soon as you enter the gateway. We stood spell-bound for a few minutes at this lovely apparition; it hardly seems of the earth, earthy. It is more like a dream of celestial beauty. No words can describe it. We felt that all previous sights were dimmed in comparison. No such effect is produced by the first view of St. Peter's, or Milan or Cologne Cathedrals; they are all majestic, but this is enchantment itself. So perfect is the form, that all other structures seem clumsy. The first impression it gives is that of a temple of white ivory, draped in white Brussels lace. The exquisite carving and tracery on the walls look like lace rather than sculpture. A beautiful dome crowns the building, and four graceful minarets stand at each angle some distance apart; they remind one of the Eddystone Lighthouse, built of white marble. Such is the dazzling whiteness, that it looks like a work of art when first unveiled; but it is 250 years old, and was built by the Emperor Shah Jehan in honour of a favourite wife. It seems descending to the region of the common-place to say that it cost 3 millions sterling, and took 17 years to build, and employed 20,000 workmen.

The finest view of the Taj is said to be from the top of the gateway, some 400 yards in front of it. I climbed to this point, and contemplated leisurely the glorious vision in front of me. The foreground is filled up with a grove of deep green foliage, very refreshing to the eye under the dazzling glare of the sun, and looking like an oasis amid the parched and dusty plains of India. In the middle of this grove lies a long narrow lane of water, lined with cypress. Masses of flowering shrubs relieve the deep green, especially the red blossom of the bouganvillia,

which hangs in immense clusters; sometimes the whole tree is one blaze of colour. Bright plumed birds flit about the trees, especially the gay green parrot, and a confused hum of chirping is heard all over the place. It is a veritable earthly paradise!

The great dome of the Taj, flanked with its four graceful minarets, like so many satellites, has a softness of colour and outline which rests the eye. The Taj itself stands upon a great marble platform, raised some feet above the ground, and it again rests upon a still larger basement of red sandstone. The building is thus raised above all the surrounding country, and can be seen from a great distance. Many fine buildings are injured by commonplace surroundings, for instance St. Paul's and Cologne Cathedrals, and so their effect is partly lost. Not so the Taj. It gleams like a lighthouse over all the plain of Agra; it is reflected on the broad bosom of the Jumna, which flows on one side, and the spacious windings of the river form one of the finest features of the landscape which spreads before me.

I find it beyond my power to describe the architecture. The building is square in form, rounded at the edges with a great alcove or hollow arch in the middle of each side. Two smaller double alcoves fill the spaces between the great ones; four smaller domes or cupolas stand on the roof round the great central dome; the four large minarets stand at the four angles of the great marble platform, several hundred feet from the main building. Two very handsome Mosques face the Taj on the right and left, each built of red sandstone inlaid with white marble, and crowned with three white domes. The surface of the Taj is ornamented with the choicest inlaid work. India was ransacked for precious stones to adorn it. The windows are covered with fine marble screens, cut into graceful patterns. Long rows of Arabic characters in black are

inlaid into the white marble; these are verses from the Koran. So numerous are they, that one-eighth of the whole volume is said to be engraven on the building. One thing more I may mention. I discern an ugly black spot under the central arch; on closer examination it turns out to be a nest of wild bees. We find this curious pendant to nearly every large arch in Northern India; we have counted as many as twelve under the roof of one Mosque. They look like large black bags, and you hear a constant hum of bees about them. The natives never touch them, or indeed any kind of bird or beast, as the Hindoos regard animal life as sacred; hence all animals are very tame in India. Squirrels hop about on the roads, and birds almost alight on your head. The natives look upon Europeans as a sort of blood-thirsty savages, because they eat flesh meat and kill animals! Indeed the mass of Hindoos regard the eating of flesh and drinking of wine as the chief badge of Christianity! Not very flattering to us!

But I must now descend from my perch, and give some account of the interior of the edifice. I seat myself on the Tomb erected to Shah Jehan in the interior, under the great dome. We have entered by a door in the central alcove. At first it seems dark, after the bright sunshine outside. No direct light falls into the interior; it is like a shell within an outer case, and the light percolates dimly through the marble fretwork. The Tomb of the Emperor and that of his favourite wife lie side by side. They are of white marble, inlaid with rich gems; emeralds, turquoises, agates, cornelians, lapis lazuli and coral abound. A railing or screen of pierced marble, wrought into elegant designs, surrounds the tombs. After remaining some time in the interior it appears quite light, and one can see that the vaults are covered with inscriptions from the Koran. Nothing strikes one in Mahomedan

countries more than the reverence paid to their sacred book. A dado runs round the whole interior, of marble beautifully carved into flowers, and vases done on panels, each surrounded with a running scroll of inlaid work of precious stones.

A wonderful echo is heard when a chord of music is struck, reverberating round the hall, and dying into stillness. It is said to surpass that of the famous Baptistery of Pisa. I have once more changed my point of view, and mounted to the top of one of the minarets, 130 feet high, and look into the very heart of the Taj, as you might do into the snowy ravines of the Alps from a neighbouring peak. The dome is now seen to be of an oval shape, not unlike an inflated balloon. Four minor domes or turrets surround it, and 16 little minarets outflank the turrets. The two Mosques and the noble gateway, like a sort of triumphal arch, look very well from this point. One more feature deserves to be mentioned. The great Fort of Agra, with its huge double wall, built by Ackbar, fills up the landscape on the West, and beyond it the city of Agra is seen peeping out of a forest of trees. A great railway bridge spans the Jumna a little way off: and here I must stop, for impatient voices call me down.

GWALIOR DACK BANGALOW,

FRIDAY, 19TH FEB. 8 P.M.

I have just received, at this out of the way place, half an hour ago, the surprising telegram that I am chosen the Liberal candidate for Flintshire, in place of Lord Richard Grosvenor, retired; that the election will be in twelve days, and that my success is assured. I hardly know how to regard this news. It is a great compliment to pay me; but we had all set our heart on "going round the world." We were planning visits to Australia, Japan and I know

not where, and rejoicing in being free from "the trammels of public life."

You will wonder how I come to date this part of my letter from Gwalior, the capital of Scindiah's dominions, one of the principal native States in India. It is only 75 miles from Agra, and we thought we would take a run here to see the far-famed fortress which our Government is about to restore to Scindiah. Mrs. S. and Miss J. remained behind, as the accommodation is rough here, and I took Mr. B. and the two boys. We left at 9 a.m. to-day, and got here by a slow train about 2 p.m. It was so cold on the way that I could hardly keep warm with two topcoats! We have visited the Fort and the Palace. The former is a wonderful natural fortress; a long rocky plateau, surrounded by a perpendicular wall of rock. One would say it was quite impregnable. The red coats are still there, but are to be withdrawn next month as a proof of confidence in Scindiah, who has always been very loyal to us. There is nothing in the Palace worth seeing. It was hardly worth the fatigue of coming here, and starting at 6.30 a.m. to-morrow. The weather has again become very cold, with a curious dull haze, very uncommon in India; one can hardly see more than two or three miles.

I now resume my doings at Agra. I need not say more about the Taj. The account I have already given embraces several visits, but the impressions were written on the spot, and transcribed here. Everything else is so dwarfed by the Taj, that it seems hardly worth while mentioning other buildings, though there are many of great interest in Agra and the vicinity. We visited the Palace of Ackbar outside the Fort, and the beautiful Pearl Mosque, which some think the finest in India. On Tuesday we visited the Tomb of the great Ackbar, the greatest monarch that India ever possessed, at Secundra, 8 miles out of Agra. It is a huge erection of red sandstone, raised on a lofty

platform, and with a lovely white marble screen at the top. On one of the windows are the 99 names of God from the Koran, and it is the custom for parents to bring their sick children there, and wash over these names, and make them drink the water that they may recover. Our guide told us that the cure was always efficacious when the people had faith! He told us of wonderful answers he had got to his prayers from his goddess!

After this we went to see an orphanage for native children, conducted by the Church Mission. There are 300 or 400 orphans brought up, mostly received at the time of the famine. They are educated as Christians; the boys are trained to trades, and the girls are trained to be wives to native Christians, and are usually married at 16. This is considered a very late age in India, as the natives usually marry their daughters at 12 or 13. The poor creatures do not even see the men to whom they are to be married, and are usually shut up for life in a dark corner of the house! The girls in the orphanage have the advantage of being allowed to say yes or no when young men come for wives; all the suitable ones are trotted out, and the girl selected is asked if she will take the man, and she usually says yes. What would our ladies say to this? What a simple method!

On Wednesday we made an expedition to a singular place, called Faltepoor Secri, a large deserted city. It was built by Ackbar 300 years ago, meaning that it should be his capital; but there was a Fakeer—a holy man, or hermit, who lived there—and he complained that the noise of the traffic interfered with his devotions, and intimated to the Emperor that he must leave the place unless he obtained quiet; so the great Emperor said that as one or other must move he would do so, and forthwith he abandoned the city to the hermit, and went and built Agra instead! I believe this is quite a true story.

There are many large buildings in the Hindoo style, and a tomb of marble, exquisitely sculptured, with the finest fretwork, in honour of the saint. We had a long drive that day of 22 miles each way, and it was very cold, but we enjoyed the sight of the country life. We passed through several large villages, and each had several wells, and it was a pretty sight to see the bullocks drawing the rope which pulled up the bucket of water. The boys have photographed some of them, which I hope will enable you to realize the scene.

All these village wells are of the same pattern, and worked in the same way. Wherever there is a well there is an oasis of green verdure around it. Water is the life blood of India, and far more valuable than the richest mines.

MONDAY, 22ND FEB.

I must now close, as we start for Lucknow this afternoon. I had a most interesting conference with leading natives here on Saturday evening at one of their houses. I am deeply impressed by the poverty of this country, and the defects of our system of government, which I will explain more fully at some other time.

Yesterday we attended service at the Havelock Baptist Chapel in the morning and the Church of England in the evening, and I also attended a service of native Christians, at which 70 or 80 were present. To-day we went over the Government College here, a splendid institution, and obtained much valuable information; but I must draw to a close.

LUCKNOW,

WEDNESDAY, 24TH FEB. 1886.

My last was from Agra last Monday. We left there that evening, and travelled by night to Cawnpore; waited in our carriage there for some time, and arrived here at 10 yesterday.

Of course our great interest was in the scenes of the famous siege, which is, perhaps, the most memorable event in the annals of the mutiny. For about four months the little garrison of 1800 men, nearly half of whom were natives, along with a number of women and children, were hemmed in by 50,000 armed rebels. They only occupied a chain of private houses, which luckily contained some deep cellars, in which the women and children found shelter. Nearly half the garrison perished during the siege, but they never yielded a point to the enemy, though most of the buildings were battered almost into ruins; they are preserved just as they were left at the siege, and the grounds are prettily laid out as gardens.

I transcribe the following from my note book:—

I am sitting on the steps of the Monument erected to Sir H. Lawrence in the grounds of the Presidency. What a contrast to the awful times of the siege! Now it is a beautiful garden; monthly roses and other flowers cover the slope that leads up to the monument, and the battered buildings in front of me are clothed with creepers, especially the scarlet bouganvillia and the yellow bignonia. The various buildings occupied by the garrison are little better than heaps of ruins; most of them are perforated by cannon balls, and pitted all over with rifle shot. We saw the room where Sir H. Lawrence received his death wound, and the one where he died. We saw the two heavy naval guns which General Peel brought from his ship for the relief of Lucknow. I think he was killed.

He was son of the great Sir Robert Peel, and brother of the present Speaker.

We then visited the Cemetery, where many of our brave countrymen sleep. We saw one Tomb, erected to the memory of 360 men of the York and Lancaster Regiment, who died during the mutiny; another to 271 of the 91st Light Infantry; another to 382 of the first Indian Fusileers. These figures do not include officers, of whom many also died. On the simple tomb of Sir H. Lawrence are engraved these words, "Here lies H. Lawrence, who tried to do his duty. May the Lord have mercy on his soul." Our native guide was himself inside the Presidency during the siege, acting as servant to Captain Fulton, who was killed; his sympathies seem to be with us, not with the mutineers. I am surprised at the apathy with which the natives talk about the mutiny, and the terrible events connected with it. They describe it without a vestige of emotion, as if it had happened in a remote country with which they had nothing to do!

It was very hot to-day. There has again been a sudden change in temperature; it has risen to 85° in the shade during the heat of the day, which is from 12 to 4 p.m. but we feel no inconvenience. It is very cool at night, and we sleep well. We are quite comfortable in the hotels, which are much better than we were led to expect. I may add, they are much cheaper than in England; indeed everything in India is very cheap.

We were disappointed in the architecture of Lucknow. It appears poor and tawdry after the splendid edifices of Agra. No marble is employed; it is brick, with plaster and stucco, and the taste is execrable. The various palaces and mosques we visited are not worth describing; we were more interested in the people and their life. Lucknow is the third greatest city in India, having 460,000 inhabitants. It is the capital of the province of Oudh, which was

annexed by Lord Dalhousie, against the wish of the people, and this had much to do with the mutiny. We spent a good deal of time again in the Bazaar.

I again transcribe from my note book.

I am sitting in a carriage in a narrow street of the Bazaar, while the rest of the party are making purchases in a native shop. The sides of the streets are occupied by rows of small shops, mostly at this point for the sale of brazen or copper pots; each native must have one of these for drinking, for no native will take water out of a vessel used by one of another caste. The stock in trade of many of the shops could be bought for 20s.

A constant stream of people is passing. Let me describe some of them. There goes a half-naked coolie, with panniers full of cut grass swinging from his shoulders; an old man, leaning on a stick, in a Joseph's coat of many colours; a coolie, with crates full of live doves; a beestic (or water carrier), with a skin full of water to lay the dust. There goes a drove of tiny donkeys with panniers; then three women, covered with loose calico, like mummies; an almost naked coolie, with an enormous load of cut straw on his head. I note in passing that no two people are dressed alike. I see nothing but cotton clothing, though many have but scant allowance. Here and there I see men with cotton quilts rolled round them; some wear turbans, but most of them small cotton caps. They generally wear loose slippers, which they throw off on entering a house. A coolie now passes, with a great water pot on his head; now two men pass, carrying something like a coffin. It is a native lady enclosed in curtains; they style it "going in purdah." Fashion prescribes this as rigidly in India, as it does in London that ladies should appear in extremely low dresses at evening parties. A London drawing room would shock the moral sense of Hindoos as much as a bull fight would ours! Occasionally

men pass carrying long stalks of sugar cane, which the people chew. Hindoos are fond of sweet things, like all people who do not use alcohol. A peon, or Government servant, with a gay uniform, now passes me; then a wild looking man, with black matted hair; a woman, with huge turned up yellow slippers. The women's ankles and arms are often loaded with bracelets or bangles, usually of copper or brass, and only worth a few pence. As a rule their noses are also pierced with rings, from which hang rude ornaments.

Now comes a long line of pilgrims, with baskets suspended from a pole which rests upon their shoulders, in which are their travelling effects. You meet these pilgrims constantly. Hindoos all try to visit some of their sacred shrines, especially "the holy city of Benares." They sometimes travel on foot for months, and often die on the way, poor creatures. Now pass four coolies, with baskets containing dried manure on their heads. The natives generally use dried cow manure for fuel, which robs the soil of its proper nourishment. A smart policeman, in blue uniform and red turban, now passes. The police seem to take life easily in India. You never see a street row or a quarrel, never a drunken man or a mob. Our low streets at home present far more odious sights. The Hindoos are a most gentle and peaceable people, and submit to superior authority as a matter of course. A gay native now passes in a drab coat, and blue silk trousers. What think you of the conjunction of colours? A man, with a large white umbrella, goes in front. I have only seen one other native using an umbrella, and it was a red one; they do not feel the sun as we do. A poor old man is now asking me for alms; he has loose grey hair, no cap; he leans upon his staff. There are many beggars, but usually they are not obtrusive, except at temples and mosques, where multitudes congregate. A boy passes,

with a tray filled with coarse sweet-meats; this is a great trade among the natives. A coolie now passes, with two heavy grindstones on his head; they are commonly used by the women to grind corn, as in Bible days. The upper stone is turned round by a handle upon the nether stone. A father passes, leading his little girl, almost nude; many of the children wear no clothes till they are 6 or 7. One wonders how they live during the cold season, when there is sometimes ice at night. A man passes with two water pots, on which he taps with an iron ring; he stops, and supplies people with a drink of water. An old man, whose legs are paralyzed, is crawling along, with some sacking under his arm. I now hear a singing woman making a melancholy noise. There is no melody in our sense of the word; it is a sad monotone, in a minor key. You seldom or never hear a Hindoo laugh, or indeed express any strong emotion. Very few women are visible in the streets, and those only of the lower castes; most of them have large nose rings. The sad music now approaches, and I see there are three females, of whom two sing alternately. They have bare feet, and are clothed in thin muslins, which hang loosely about them, and almost cover their faces; two of them carry brass vessels. I put a few pice into one of them. People here seldom thank you for anything; they take what you give in an apathetic sort of way. Nobody in India makes a fuss about anything; the wheels of life glide on noiselessly.

I remark, in passing, that the shops present the appearance of two rows of piazzas, partitioned off into small wooden boxes; each has an outer and an inner division: they expose their wares in the outer, and do their work in the inner one. The women seem to live in the upper story; they are hardly ever seen: all external work is done by men. The rooms, or compartments of the shop, are 5 or 6 feet square, and in this small space there are often

four or five people squatting; no one sits on a chair or any kind of seat.

We now drive along the street, and I take note of the various kinds of shops, which afford a clue to the industries carried on. I give you a list;—Tinware, money-changing, pipes, printing, bookbinding, seeds, sweetmeats, cooking food, kites, string, cooked food, betelnut, caps, beads, English hand-knitting, gold thread, native pictures, stamping cloth in silver, spinning silk, prints, types for printing, precious stones, jewellery, lacquer work, braided caps, pottery, tin lamps, hookahs, lamps and dishes, bags, hempen cord, watch or clock making, &c. I might multiply the list indefinitely. The goods represent very little value, and seem to us rather to supply the secondary than the primary wants of man.

When we returned to our hotel we saw some extraordinary performances of Indian jugglers. They did the sort of things that Maskelyne and Cook do, but also some extraordinary experiments with snakes. They had a box in which was a live cobra and another snake, which they freely handled, to our horror. The cobra darted his fang several times at the man, but we learned that the poison had been extracted. Then he put the other snake on the verandah, and set a mongoose at it—a sort of large rat, which is the deadly enemy of snakes; it fastened on its head, and apparently hacked it in pieces, till the snake lay quite dead to all appearance, and a swarm of flies settled on its bloody head, as they do on dead bodies. Then the man offered to bring it to life again, if we would give him four annas extra, which we did, and he played a musical instrument, whereupon the creature began to move; he then pulled it with his hand, and it revived, and he put it back in the box! It reminded us of Pharoah's magicians, "who did the like with their enchantments."

In the afternoon we called upon a fine young soldier,

a corporal of the 17th Lancers, who had made our acquaintance at Agra; he had been a member of the Liverpool Gymnasium and Y.M.C.A. and was the champion player at the Gymnasium. He showed us all over the lines, stables, &c. and ended by taking us to the coffee room, of which he was secretary, and where he worked for the good of the men along with the chaplain. It was crammed with soldiers amusing themselves in an innocent way; five hundred belonged to it. There is a large garrison at Lucknow, some 5000 or 6000 men, of whom half are British. S. dined with us in the evening; we felt a great interest in him, and hope he will soon get a commission—he is looking for it and well deserves it. The soldiers in India are much better off than at home, and like it better; much is now done for them, and certainly those we saw looked well and hearty, and in fine condition. I except Delhi, where the barracks are not healthy. Many of the soldiers are now total abstainers, but there is still a good deal of drunkenness, and its effects are far worse in India than in England. The condition of the soldiers is, however, much better than it was in former years.

We left Lucknow on Thursday morning early, for Cawnpore, meaning to spend the day there, and see the scenes of the terrible massacre which has painfully immortalized “the well of Cawnpore,” but on reaching the latter place we found the trains from Cawnpore so awkward that we resolved to go direct to Benares, and I am continuing my letter from that place, on Saturday, the 27th February.

We travelled all day and reached the station for Benares, which is on the far side of the Ganges, at 11.30 p.m. We crossed that famous river on a rickety bridge of boats. It is now the dry season, and the bed of the river is only partly covered by water; indeed the volume seems small in comparison with the great American rivers, but in the rainy season it rises 50 feet, and becomes a gigantic stream

overflowing all the level country. We had then to drive four miles through the city to our hotel (Clarke's), situated near the cantonment. It was a lovely drive; we saw a good many lights in the native houses, and several people at work. We were thankful to get home and get to bed, tired, at 1 a.m.

Yesterday we visited some of the temples of the city. This place is the headquarters of Hindoo worship, and multitudes of pilgrims come annually to bathe in the sacred Ganges. It is a city "wholly given to idolatry;" it has 1000 temples, and I do not know how many priests and idols. We have been through several of the temples yesterday and to-day; architecturally they are poor affairs, far inferior to the great mosques of Delhi and Agra. The general impression left on you is pity for the degraded superstition of the people. One temple is sacred to monkeys, and these creatures run loose about it; another to cows, and we saw a number of them inside! There is hardly anything in heaven or earth that is not worshipped by some sect of Hindoos; but the most striking sight was the bathing in the river. We started about seven this morning, and took a boat on the river, and rowed along the banks, and saw crowds of Hindoos bathing in the filthy water. All sorts of impurities float on the surface—it is a sickening sight; yet they drink this horrid mixture, which is like pea soup, and take home large pots of it for use!

We saw many large straw umbrellas on little platforms on the bank, and under each of these a priest is seated, who puts paint on the higher caste natives, after they have bathed. Some of the Brahmins have the upper part of the body painted all over, and we saw upon them the sacred thread, which they receive at consecration, and which they never cast off; only the higher castes wear the thread, those

who wear it are called "twice-born;" it is just a common piece of string. We saw the separate place reserved for the bathing of widows; they are forbidden by Hindoo law to re-marry, and are treated as outcasts. We also saw where the bodies of the dead are burned, and one corpse was being consumed in a fire of sticks as we passed. The higher and richer castes burn their dead; the common people bury or throw the bodies into the Ganges, where they are devoured by vultures. Along the river are rows of large houses, built by native Rajahs (princes); they all aim at having a house at Benares, and when they think their end is approaching they come here to die.

On our way home we passed the building or shed in which is kept the famous "Car of Juggernath." How different it looks from the famous structure we are familiar with in missionary records. It was a poor commonplace looking machine; a sort of wooden platform, 6 feet high, running upon a number of small wheels, and upon the platform a small wooden canopy, inside of which is placed an image and a priest on the days of procession. The law now forbids any human sacrifices, so no victims are now crushed under its wheels. The boys photographed it. I understand there are several other sacred cars in other cities of India, some of them larger than this one.

We are going out this afternoon, to pay a visit to the Rajah of Benares, who has expressed a wish to see us; and in the evening we expect the heads of the Church of England Missionary Society to dine with us, and we hope to hear from them something of the progress of mission-work—this is quite their headquarters, and most societies are established here. The New Testament is being revised here by twelve missionaries, who occupy the palace of one of the Rajahs, who has placed it at their disposal. Is not this odd, and he is not a Christian!

SUNDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY.

I will now close this letter, as to-morrow we go on to Calcutta, and I shall hardly have time to write from there before the mail closes. We shall anxiously await the news of the Election. Success will not be a cause of much joy to us, for we are unwilling to plunge so soon into the whirlpool of London life. We went to the English Church this morning, and heard a good practical address, the congregation chiefly soldiers. In the evening we go to the Baptist Church, where a Presbyterian, Mr. Gray from Ajmere, is to preach. We had four of the Church Missionary Society's agents with us last evening; they were nice people, and we enjoyed their company. They all testify that progress is very slow; the most promising work is the training of the young; they have a Normal School and an Orphanage under their charge.

10 P.M.—We have just been to the Baptist Chapel, and heard an excellent sermon from the Presbyterian missionary of Ajmere, who is here as one of the translators of the New Testament. Three of the Baptist missionaries spent the evening with us afterwards. And now I must close.

KANDY, CEYLON,

16TH MARCH, 1886.

I must begin a letter from this lovely island, though I know I cannot finish it till I get on board again. The last of our trip has proved the best, for we have seen nothing in India that approaches the beauty of Ceylon. Our vessel, the "Shannon," stopped three days at Colombo, which gave us the opportunity of running up to the ancient capital of Ceylon. We left at 7 a.m. on Monday morning, and came here in four hours by railway; it was literally entering on a new world. In India the ground was mostly

parched up, and the eye wandered over long arid plains, relieved by delicious bits of green, where water was obtained ; but here, we are in the midst of a large fernery or greenhouse—it is as if the palm house at Kew was suddenly expanded to half the size of England! Only it is much prettier, for you have a far greater variety of shrubs. You have every description of horticulture with the fruit hanging in clusters, and pretty flowering shrubs line the roads and festoon the hill sides, and then the natural scenery is superb. This little town is 2000 feet high, and is embosomed in lovely hills running up to 5000 to 6000 feet. It is very like the scenery of Northern Italy, between Como and Maggiore, only richer, with a still brighter sun and a bluer sky.

A sweet little lake lies beside the town, and exquisite drives are cut round the mountain sides in all directions. We have just returned from one of surpassing loveliness, and although we are almost under the Equator, only six degrees north of the line, the temperature is delicious ; it is quite cool at night, and only hot for a few hours in the day time. The hill sides all round Kandy are lined with planters' houses, some at much higher elevation than this, and in quite a cool climate. We have come to the conclusion that we have seen no place out of England so delightful to live in as Ceylon at some 3000 or 4000 feet above sea level. The great business of the island used to be coffee planting, but a disease attacked the coffee plant some years ago and almost destroyed it ; now you see hill sides lying fallow, with the bare sticks of the coffee plant adhering to the soil. But the planters are now growing tea on a large scale, and find that the climate suits it admirably ; they can produce it at 6d per lb, and expect to beat India and China. If their expectations are fulfilled, Ceylon will become a wealthy island once again.

We visited a plantation yesterday, and encountered a

thunderstorm and a drenching rain on the way. It was quite pleasant to us, as we have had only one or two falls of rain since we left home ; it wonderfully freshened up the air, and to-day the vegetation is full of sweet odours, and the dust is laid. Our friend had been a coffee planter, but the disease had almost destroyed the plants, and he was now growing tea, cocoa and cinchona ; the latter produces quinine. His house was high up on a hill side, and commanded a charming view ; he has been twenty years here, and enjoys capital health. I think there is no better climate in the world ; his wife and little girl also look very well.

We visited the Botanic Gardens this morning, and saw the most wonderful collection of tropical plants it has ever been my lot to see ; among others we were specially struck with the giant bamboo, a collection of hundreds of separate stems proceeding from the same root, and each 100 feet high ; another was the giant banian tree, which spreads over so much ground that a regiment might have encamped under it. As we drove about to-day through this luscious vegetation, we felt almost intoxicated with the beauty. The people are also very interesting ; they are a small, neatly-made, and very dark race, called the Singalese, speaking a different language and being of a different religion from the people of India. They are Buddhists here, as they are in China and Japan, and are not idolators in the sense that the Hindoos are ; their religion is of a dreamy, unpractical kind, and hardly amounts to faith in God at all, but consists in a kind of Pantheism, and their chief hope is to get rid of conscious existence after death, and to be absorbed into the state called *nirvana*, which is little different from total extinction of being.

The Singalese have mostly little plots of land, with cocoanut and banana trees, and cannot be persuaded to work for hire ; they seem contented and well fed, and have not that look of extreme poverty you see in much of India.

The planters have to import the natives of Southern India, styled Tamils, to do their work. They find them very good and willing workers; they give them 8d a day, which is double what they can get in India.

When one beholds the wondrous beauty of this island, and enjoys its delightful climate, and considers that it is only three weeks' journey from England, one wonders that so few travellers come out to it. There is nothing in Europe to compare with it as a change from our winter climate.

ON STEAMER, IN INDIAN OCEAN,
21ST MARCH, 1886.

Another leap forward on our way home. We left Colombo on Wednesday afternoon, and have had a delightful passage since then; the sea smooth, with a gentle breeze, rather hot for a day or two, but now quite cool. The ship is very full, and there are a number of children on board, but we are quite comfortable, and the passengers seem nice people, but I am so busy writing my impressions of India, and reading books, that I do not mix much with them. We had service to-day in the saloon in the forenoon, and are to have one again in the evening. We have prayers every day in the saloon, after breakfast, by the captain's orders, he is a pious man, and several of the passengers attend.

I do not think I told you of our voyage from Calcutta to Colombo; it just occupied a week, and we had beautiful weather all the way. We stopped for a day at Madras, and we went ashore and had a most interesting day. I dined with the Governor, Mr. Grant Duff, in the evening, and had a conference with leading natives at their club, and also went over the splendid missionary school of Dr. Miller, where 1500 children and young men are receiving a capital education. I was much pleased with Madras.

It is wonderful how much of India we have seen in so short a time. We have been deeply interested by its manifold problems, and now are turning our face homewards to meet new and difficult questions.

SUEZ,

MONDAY, 29TH MARCH, 1886.

I now close this letter, and post it here that it may go by the Brindisi route, and so arrive a day or two before we can reach London.

We have had a very favourable passage thus far. The sail up the Red Sea was a little rough, and the wind got cold the last day or two. The temperature fell from 87° at Aden to 62° yesterday. It seems as cold here as when we passed this way in January.

P.S.—We had a beautiful passage home, passing through the Suez Canal and across the Mediterranean to Marseilles, where we disembarked, and reached London on 8th April, in time to take my seat the day that Mr. Gladstone brought in his Home Rule Bill for Ireland, in the most crowded House ever assembled at Westminster.





